

**Testimony of Mark E. Strauss
Founder & CEO of TOGO Media
Before the Commerce Committee
Hartford, CT**

March 1, 2016

**Testifying in favor of Bill No. 303
AN ACT CONCERNING AN ENTREPRENEUR LEARNER'S PERMIT PROGRAM.**

Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo and all the members of the Commerce Committee, Thank you. My name is Mark Strauss and I am both a Connecticut business owner and resident of the State of Connecticut.

I appreciate the opportunity to briefly address the Committee in strong support of Bill No. 303, an act concerning an Entrepreneur Learner's Permit program.

The creation of a Connecticut Entrepreneur Learner's Permit program as described in Bill No. 303 would effectively meet two (2) important goals.

- 1. It would directly address the special needs of the entrepreneurial community at which it is directly targeted and;*
- 2. It would leverage these benefits, generating returns to Connecticut in excess of its limited implementation cost.*

Bill No. 303 would lower the economic risk of starting a new venture in Connecticut by decreasing the cash required to begin.

Beginning any venture can be a challenging, risk-filled endeavor. Supported by some of our country's top educational institutions and educators, Connecticut nurtures some of our most talented entrepreneurial leaders. It is important to remember that while these powerful influencers may be prepared to take on the risks associated with starting a new venture, they have learned from the best, not to seek these risks out.

Our best and brightest business leaders may be risk *takers* but are not risk *seekers*.

The creation of a Connecticut Entrepreneur Learner's Permit program would, in effect, lower the risk of beginning a new venture in Connecticut.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf said, "*You can't help someone get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.*"

Connecticut is already home to two additional resources, critical to growing a new business, wealth and leadership experience. Creating an economic environment that supports young business would not only help to keep these potent economic drivers here in Connecticut but potentially redirect their influence and extraordinary value back into the State.

Nurturing new businesses that, perhaps more than any other time, seek the financial and mentorship of this unique wealth of local resources has the potential to keep them here as well as attract new investment—positively contributing to Connecticut’s economy far beyond those immediately impacted by this new and valuable legislation.

From an economic development standpoint, not only is Bill No. 303 an opportunity to keep our newest business innovators here in Connecticut, it helps to create an economic environment in the State that both maintains and attracts the reinvestment of wealth and leadership that is already here.

For these reasons, I strongly support Bill No. 303, I urge this committee to support it as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Strauss